

Evaluating reading interventions using research-based features analysis.

1 to 1 tutorials		1 to 3 groups		1 to 7+ groups
Pupil/text matches		Most pupil/text matches		Standard texts with little pupil/text matching
Triples daily reading volume		Doubles daily reading volume		No increase in reading volume
Expert teacher provides instruction		Certified teacher provides instruction		Teaching assistant or aide or volunteer provides instruction
Focused on meaning and meta-cognition development		Some focus on meaning and meta-cognition		Focused on skills development in isolation
Easy access to interesting texts and student choice		Easy access to interesting texts some student choice		Standard texts with no student choice
Well coordinated with classroom lessons		Some coordination with classroom lessons		Standard texts with no coordination with classroom lessons

Monitoring of student progress is frequent and full – Running records, QRI, oral and silent reading comprehension		Monitoring of student progress is sporadic but full		Monitoring of student progress is narrow – DIBELS or AIMSWeb
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Points 5

4

3

2

1

Rating your programs proximity to a research-based intervention that will accelerate student reading development.

40 Points

Very well designed

35 points

Well designed

30 points

Design could be improved

25 points

Not well matched to research

20 points

Close to traditional non-research-based designs

15 points or less

No evidence of a research-based design

® Richard L. Allington, University of Tennessee

The Six T's of Effective Literacy Instruction

In a ten-year study of exemplary literacy instruction, here's what matters:

TIME: How much time is spent actually reading? Effective teachers have students do more guided reading, more independent reading and more reading in social studies and science. In many exemplary classrooms, children are reading and writing for half the day! "Stuff" does not dominate instructional time. (This includes test-prep worksheets, copying definitions, and after-reading comprehension worksheets.)

TEXTS: Children have books they can actually read with a high level of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. All children are not, therefore, be in the same book. "One-size-fits-all" contradicts everything that we know about effective teaching. "Simply put, students need enormous quantities of successful reading to become independent, proficient readers." Motivation for reading is dramatically influenced by reading success.

TEACHING: Wonderful teachers don't "assign and assess," they are provide "active instruction." Explicit demonstrations of cognitive strategies are modeled. The excellent point is made that worksheets can be completed only by children who already know what to do; children don't acquire knowledge from a worksheet - they need teaching. Children don't acquire strategies from questions at the end of the chapter either. Commercial programs typically provide no useful information on explicit instruction, simply a definitional model. Expert teaching fosters strategies that transfer from structured practice to independent use.

TALK: There's more of it. It's more conversational than interrogational. Discussion is purposeful and personalized, not scripted or packaged. Thoughtful classroom talk focuses on making children's thinking visible and building understanding.

TASKS: Leaving behind low-level worksheet tasks, effective teachers demonstrate greater use of longer assignments, tasks that integrate several content areas, and substantive work with more complexity. Exemplary teachers provide "managed choice" with students working on similar but different tasks.

TESTING: Student work is evaluated based on effort and improvement. Rubrics shift responsibility for improvement to the students so "luck" doesn't play a part. Most effective teachers use almost no test-preparation materials feeling that good instruction is what makes the difference. (Other data, by the way, bears this out.)

"In the end it will become clearer that there are no "proven programs," just schools in which we find more expert teachers - teachers who need no script to tell them what to do...Are we creating schools in which every year every teacher becomes more expert?"

From: Allington, *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 2002.

Six Literacy Experiences Children Should Have Every Day

In this important *Educational Leadership* article, Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel present six high-quality experiences they believe all children should have every day if they are to become successful, engaged readers. These experiences are especially important for struggling readers – but tragically, they’re least likely to have these experiences.

- **Every child reads something he or she chooses.** “The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive,” say Allington and Gabriel. “Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read.”

- **Every child reads accurately.** This means reading material at the “just right” level of difficulty. Spending more time reading doesn’t help unless students are reading at 98 percent or higher accuracy. “When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills,” say Allington and Gabriel. “Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading.”

- **Every child reads something he or she understands.** Comprehension is the goal of reading instruction, say the authors. “But too often, struggling readers get interventions that focus on basic skills in isolation, rather than on reading connected text for meaning. This common misuse of intervention time often arises from a grave misinterpretation of what we know about reading difficulties.” Struggling readers aren’t “wired differently”, as some brain research implies. Their brains benefit from high-quality reading instruction with engaging and comprehensible content. The bottom line: more authentic reading develops better readers.

- **Every child writes about something personally meaningful.** “The opportunity to compose continuous text about something meaningful is not just something nice to have when there’s free time after a test or at the end of the school year,” say Allington and Gabriel. “Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose.”

- **Every child talks with peers about reading and writing.** Research shows that conversations with classmates improve comprehension and engagement with texts – students analyze, comment, and compare, thinking about what they read. “Time for students to talk about their reading and writing is perhaps one of the most underused, yet easy-to-implement, elements of instruction,” say the authors.

- **Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud.** Listening to a competent adult modeling good reading helps students with vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of the story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension – and yet few teachers above first grade regularly read aloud to their students. “Most of the classroom instruction we have observed lacks these six research-based elements,” conclude Allington and Gabriel. Here are their two suggestions:

- Eliminate virtually all worksheets/workbooks and use the money to expand classroom libraries.
- Ban test-prep materials. There’s no evidence that they improve reading or test scores.

- “Every Child Every Day” *Educational Leadership*, March 2012 (Vol. 69, #6, p. 10-15).